and Mongolia attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit which was held in Shanghai on 15 June, 2006.

Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister, was not able to attend the SCO Summit due to domestic pre-occupations. India was represented by Shri Murli Deora, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas. Shri Deora called on the Chinese President Mr. Hu Jintao during his visit. Both leaders exchanged views on issues of common interest and expressed satisfaction over the recent positive developments in India-China relations. They also noted that frequent exchanges between the leaders of the two countries had contributed to greater mutual understanding between the two countries and reinforced their friendly ties.

Demarcation of boundary in Rann of Kutch

313. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there were differences on demarcation of boundary in the marshy Sir Creek area in the Rann of Kutch and officials of India and Pakistan had two rounds of talks recently on Sir Creek as part of the Indo-Pak Composite Dialogue Process to resolve the long pending dispute over 96 km. strip of water dividing both the countries in the marshy land; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Talks on Sir Creek were held on August 6-7, 2004 in New Delhi where both India and Pakistan presented their positions and exchanged views on the various issues involved. During the next round of discussions in Rawalpindi on May 28-29, 2005 the two sides agreed to continue their discussions aimed at an early resolution of the issue for the mutual benefit of the two countries. In the third round of Composite Dialogue discussions on the Sir Creek, held on May 25-26, 2006 in New Delhi, delineation of the land boundary and delimitation of the maritime boundary in the Sir Creek area were discussed. It was agreed to conduct a joint survey of the Sir Creek and adjoining areas and waters between November 2006 and March 2007. It was also agreed that the extent and modalities of the joint survey

be worked out in a meeting of techical experts in August, 2006. The meeting would also discuss the options for delimitation of the maritime boundary.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

314. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a forum for regional co-operation among the Republic of China, Russia and some of the Central Asian countries and Iran have been formed under the title of Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO);

(b) whether India is a member of the Organisation;

(c) what are the advantages for our country becoming a member of SCO; and

(d) to what extent such a membership would affect the present Indo-US relations in view of the keen interest taken by Iran in SCO?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) The six Member countries of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) are China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The four SCO Observer countries are Mongolia, India, Iran and Pakistan.

(c) The SCO provides an opportunity for India to cooperate with members and observers to increase economic interaction, cultural exchanges and work jointly on counter-terrorism and against illegal trafficking of narcotics.

(d) India's association with the SCO does not affect its relations with any country.

Police verification for passport

315. DR. VIJAY MALLYA:
MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a move to do away with police verification in the matter of issue of passports to certain selected categories of Indian citizens;